

# ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

## DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES



### NEWS RELEASE

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### **Prince William Sound Salmon Fishery News Release #41**

**COPPER RIVER DISTRICT:** The Copper River District will open at 7:00 am on Thursday, July 18 for a 36-hour commercial fishing period. Waters within the Chinook salmon inside closure area will be OPEN during this commercial fishing period. The cumulative sonar count through July 16 was 1.19 million fish whereas the anticipated inriver passage range for this date is 635,631-976,147 fish. The count from midnight through 6:00 am this morning was 2,584 fish, which projects to a daily total of 10,336 fish. The minimum inriver passage objective for today is 6,532 fish. For the week ending July 13, the actual Copper River Delta survey index count was 44,520 versus an anticipated range of 30,055–71,040 sockeye salmon. An aerial survey of the Copper River Delta is being flown today. The hatchery contributions from the period that closed on July 6 were 43% Gulkana and 2% Main Bay Hatchery. The preliminary harvest estimate for the fishing period that closed Tuesday, July 16 was 19,400 sockeye salmon with 213 deliveries reported. The cumulative Copper River District commercial harvest to date is 8,600 Chinook salmon and 1.56 million sockeye salmon.

The Copper River District is open to subsistence fishing concurrent with commercial fishing periods until closed at the end of the season. Subsistence permits may be obtained during regular business hours. The Cordova ADF&G office is open to the public Monday - Friday, 8:00 am - 12:00 pm and 1:00 pm - 5:00 pm. **Subsistence permits are not available outside of regular office hours.**

**BERING RIVER DISTRICT:** The Bering River District will open at 7:00 am on Thursday, July 18 for a 36-hour commercial fishing period. For the week ending July 13, the actual Bering River District survey index count was 14,910 versus a minimum anticipated range of 11,051–24,313 sockeye salmon. An aerial survey of the Bering River District is being flown today. No harvest was reported for the commercial fishing period that closed Tuesday, July 16.

**MONTAGUE DISTRICT:** The Port Chalmers Subdistrict will open to commercial drift gillnet fishing for an 84-hour period starting at 8:00 am on Thursday, July 18 with an additional 60-hour period anticipated to begin at 8:00 am on Monday, July 22. This schedule is anticipated to remain in effect until further notice. The western boundary of the Port Chalmers Subdistrict is defined by lines from 60°20.00'N., 147°26.59'W. to 60°14.75'N., 147°35.35'W. to 60°02.50'N., 147°44.41'W. Regulatory closed waters and anadromous stream closures within the Port Chalmers Subdistrict will not be in effect until further notice. Harvest from the period that closed Sunday, July 14 was 9,000 chum salmon with 58 deliveries reported. The cumulative Port Chalmers Subdistrict commercial harvest to date is 453,000 chum salmon.

**COGHILL DISTRICT:** The Coghill District, excluding the Bettles Bay Subdistrict and excluding the WNH THA and SHA, will open to commercial DRIFT GILLNET fishing for a 36-hour period starting at 8:00 am on Thursday, July 18. **Waters of the WNH THA and SHA up to a line of buoys in front of the barrier net will open to commercial DRIFT GILLNET AND PURSE SEINE fishing for an 84-hour period starting at 8:00 am on Thursday, July 18.** Regulation 5 AAC 24.368(f) states that "seine gear may be used in the Esther Subdistrict for the purpose of preventing the deterioration of fish quality of the harvestable surplus of chum salmon that is not being adequately harvested by the drift gillnet fleet". Harvest from the period that closed Saturday, July 13 was 77,000 chum, 6,000 sockeye, and 209,000 pink salmon with 289 deliveries reported. Cumulative harvest through this date was 2.02 million chum, 80,000 sockeye, and 293,000 pink salmon. As of July 16, PWSAC had utilized 117,000 chum salmon for broodstock and as of July 17 had estimated 97,000-138,000 chum salmon in the WNH HEEZ. PWSAC's chum salmon broodstock goal is 216,000 fish. The cumulative passage at the Coghill River weir through July 16 is 15,893 sockeye salmon versus an anticipated count of 15,415 fish.

**ESHAMY DISTRICT:** The Main Bay Subdistrict, **excluding the MBH SHA and AGZ**, will open to commercial gillnet fishing for a 24-hour period starting at 8:00 am on Thursday, July 18. Harvest from the period that closed Tuesday, July 16 was 2,630 chum, 12,200 pink and 7,200 sockeye salmon with 133 deliveries reported. Cumulative harvest through this date was 212,000 chum, 48,700 pink and 471,000 sockeye salmon.

**UNAKWIK DISTRICT:** The Unakwik District is now closed for the 2013 commercial fishing season. No harvest was reported for the fishing period that closed Tuesday, July 16.

**SEINE FISHERIES:** Please refer to the Coghill District section of this news release for information pertaining to commercial purse seine fishing opportunity in the Coghill District. All other fisheries remain as previously announced.

**VFDA reports improved broodstock collection progress at/near Solomon Gulch Hatchery (SGH).** Time and area for future commercial fishing periods will be based on consideration for VFDA broodstock collection progress, harvest results from the July 17 fishery, and wild stock escapement indices. It is anticipated that there will be a broad area opener on Friday, July 19 in the Eastern, Northern, Northwestern, and Southeastern districts, with time and area to be announced on Thursday, July 18.

ADF&G otolith contribution estimates for the Coghill District CPF opener that ended on Saturday, July 13 result in a harvest composition of 69% hatchery and 31% wild stock pink salmon, with a wild stock harvest of approximately 65,200 pink salmon. Of the estimated 143,400 hatchery fish harvested on this date, the hatchery composition is as follows: 95% SGH, and 5% WNH. ADF&G otolith contribution estimates for the Southwestern District CPF opener that ended Sunday, July 14 result in a harvest composition of 35% hatchery and 65% wild stock pink salmon, with a wild stock harvest of approximately 12,100 pink salmon. Of the estimated 6,580 hatchery fish harvested on this date, the hatchery composition is as follows: 84% SGH, 8% AFK, and 8% WNH.

ADF&G sampling of pink salmon harvested in Valdez Arm on July 11 resulted in an average weight of 2.94 pounds. The final harvest estimate for the July 15 fishery in the Eastern and Southeastern districts is 2.25 million pink salmon using this average weight. The cumulative Eastern District pink salmon harvest through July 15 includes approximately 1.5 million cost recovery fish, and approximately 16.6 million CPF fish using this average weight. ADF&G sampling of CPF harvest from Valdez Arm on July 15 resulted in an estimated sex ratio of 59% female.

**SOUTHWESTERN DISTRICT:** On the east side of Knight Island, the waters of Marsha Bay, west of 147° 39.75' W. long., will open to purse seine fishing for an 84-hour period beginning at 8:00 am on Thursday, July 18, with an additional 60-hour period beginning at 8:00 am on Monday, July 22. This schedule is anticipated to remain in effect until further notice. Anadromous stream closures within Marsha Bay will not be in effect until further notice.

The AFK Hatchery THA and SHA will open to purse seine fishing at 8:00 am Thursday, July 18 for 84 hours. **The AFK Hatchery THA and SHA will then close to commercial purse seine fishing as PWSAC and the department switch to pink salmon management in the Southwestern District.** PWSAC anticipates beginning its pink salmon cost recovery program at AFK, CCH, and WNH during the week of July 22. Future CPF openings targeting PWSAC enhanced pink salmon in hatchery subdistricts will be determined by cost recovery fishing progress and run entry, and will be announced at a later date.

**The next scheduled salmon fisheries announcement is anticipated to occur by 2:00 pm Thursday, July 18.**

Permit holders are advised that unscheduled announcements based on current escapement data may occur at any time inseason either establishing an additional period or extending an open period.

Announcement recordings are available for **gillnet fisheries at 907-424-7535 and seine fisheries at 907-424-7345. In addition, announcement recordings are available in Anchorage at 267-2843.**

Additionally, announcements, inseason harvest data, and escapement data are available at the following web addresses:

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=commercialbyareacopperriver.main> (Copper River homepage) or

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=commercialbyareapws.main> (Prince William Sound homepage).

Unless otherwise specified, all openings are clock openings based on Alaska Daylight Time, which is based on Coordinated Universal Time and may be obtained by calling 303-499-7111.

The department encourages commercial permit holders to renew their licenses early and to check their CFEC vessel registration stickers to make sure that they are current.

The department also encourages permit holders to report observed violations to Wildlife Safeguard at 800-478-3377. Reports are anonymous and cash rewards may be paid for successful prosecution of violations.

PWS commercial fishers are reminded that area fisheries often necessitate fishing in close proximity to marine mammals. Under the Marine Mammals Protection Act (MMPA), the PWS drift gillnet fishery is classified as a Category II fishery. Participants in Category I and II fisheries must be registered in the Marine Mammal Avoidance Program (MMAP) to be authorized for lawful incidental, but not intentional, marine mammal takes during fishing. However, this authorization explicitly does not exempt holders of commercial fishing permits from the MMPA prohibition on takes of marine mammals listed as endangered or threatened under the Endangered Species Act. As a participant in the PWS drift gillnet fishery you are automatically registered in the Marine Mammal Authorization Program (MMAP) by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). As a participant in a Category II fishery, you must:

- Maintain an MMAP Authorization Certificate, or a photocopy, on board the vessel while engaging in any of the fisheries identified on the reverse side of the certificate. For non-vessel or set net fisheries, the enclosed Certificate, or a photocopy, must be in the possession of the permit holder during fishing operations. This Certificate, in combination with a current, valid state or Federal fishing permit, will serve as your authorization to incidentally take non-endangered or non-threatened marine mammals in the course of commercial fishing operations.
- Report all injuries and mortalities of marine mammals within 48 hours of returning from the trip during which these takes occurred using the MMAP Mortality/Injury Reporting Form (visit [http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/pdfs/interactions/mmap\\_reporting\\_form.pdf](http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/pdfs/interactions/mmap_reporting_form.pdf) for a copy).
- If so requested, take an observer aboard your vessel.

Purse seine and set gillnet gear are classified as a category III fisheries under the MMPA. Category III fishery participants are automatically exempted from the incidental take prohibition in the MMPA. Therefore, you do not need to maintain the MMAP certificate aboard your vessel, but must report any incidental takes of marine mammals within 48 hours of the incident or your return to port. Such reports must be made on the Marine Mammals Authorization Program Mortality/Injury Reporting Form.

Because some marine mammals are also listed under the Endangered Species Act, incidental takes are also regulated under that act and are not authorized. All MMPA category fisheries are liable for incidentally taking ESA listed species.

Please reference [http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/pdfs/esa\\_factsheet.pdf](http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/pdfs/esa_factsheet.pdf) for a list of marine mammals currently listed under the ESA (you should periodically check with the National Marine Fisheries Service for any changes in listed species). Under the ESA, take means to "harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, or collect, or to attempt to engage in any such conduct." 16 U.S.C. 1532(19); and harass means an "intentional or negligent act or omission which creates the likelihood of injury to the wildlife by annoying it to such an extent as to significantly disrupt normal behavioral patterns which include, but are not limited to, breeding, feeding, or sheltering." (50 C.F.R. 17.3).

To reduce the possibility of incidentally taking an ESA listed species and its associated liability ADF&G recommends that:

- Fishermen participating in area fisheries remain vigilant in monitoring gear when marine mammals may be present.
- Fishermen use avoidance measures (e.g., not fishing or relocating fishing activities when marine mammals are present or likely to be present) to minimize interactions with marine mammals.
- Avoid fishing in areas where marine mammals are likely to be present at night or when visibility or weather conditions make it difficult to spot marine mammals.

For further questions concerning marine mammal regulations call NMFS at 907-271-5006.